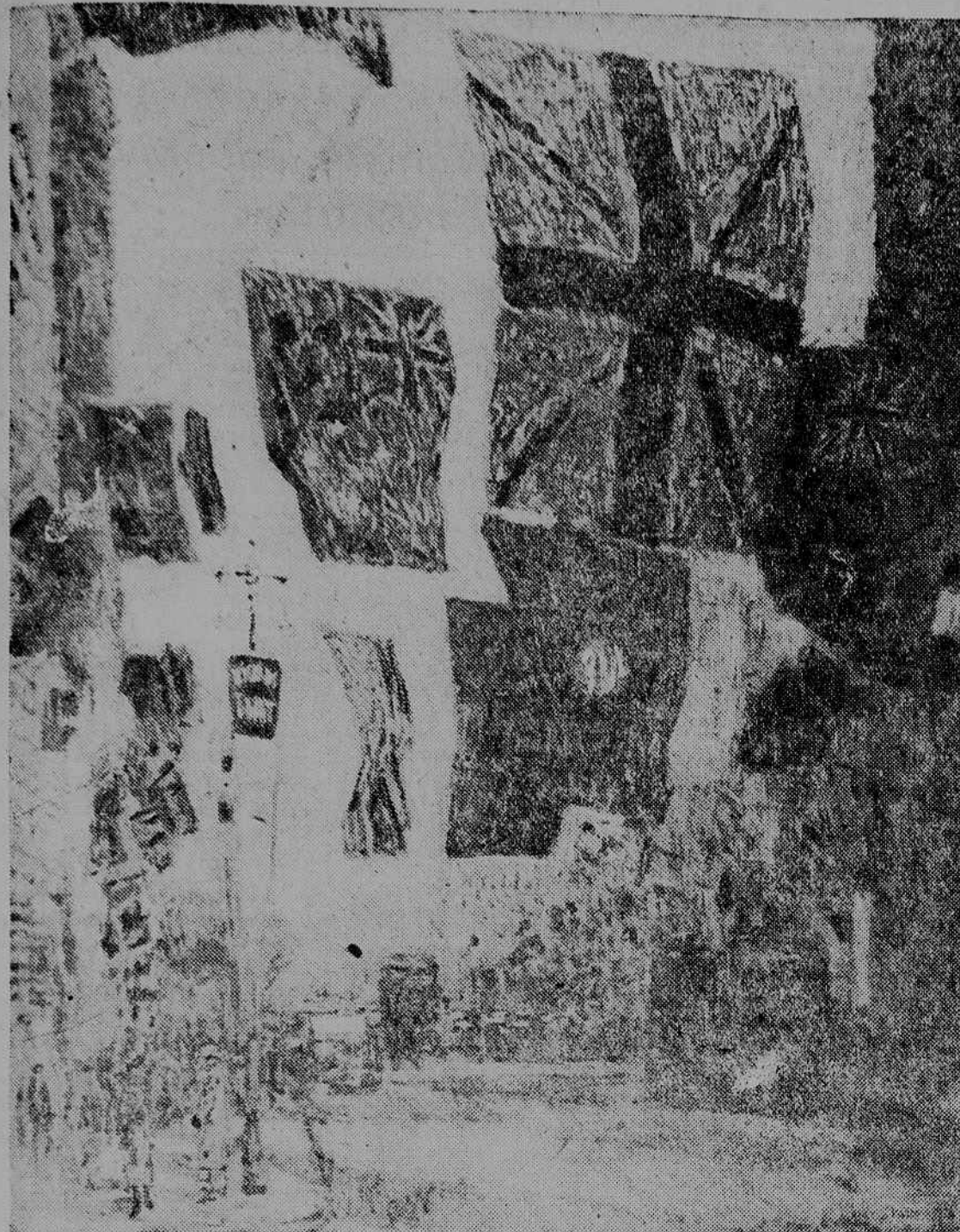


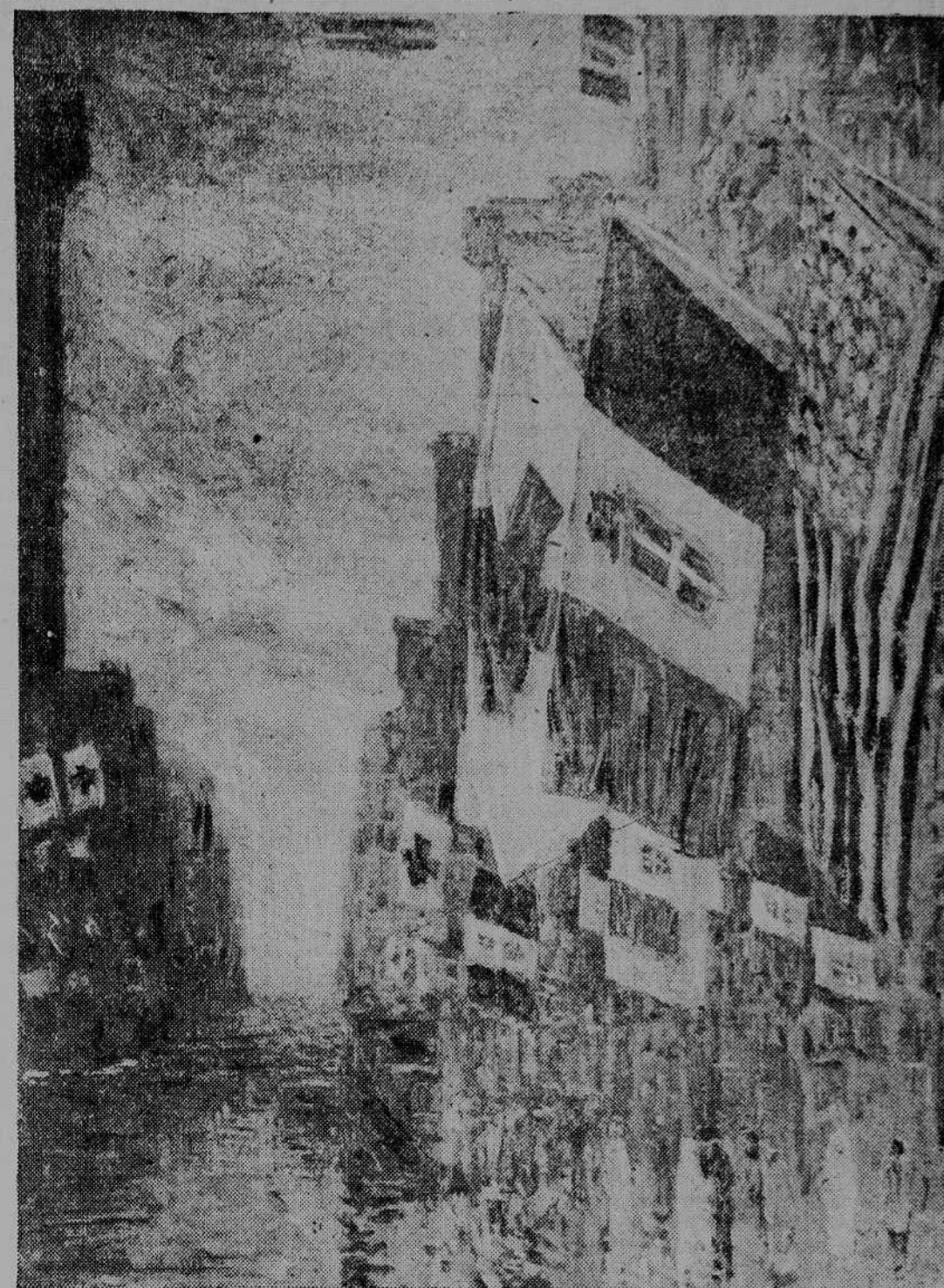
Flags, and the Man Who Paints Them



Great Britain



Childe Hassam—Self-Portrait



Italy



France



Early Morning on the Avenue



Flags on Fifty-seventh Street

THE very essence of a flag is bright color; it is strange that painters never saw the possibilities in flags before. Childe Hassam, painter of sunlight and air, did not fail to find their brightness seductive when he found them whipping the breezes on every side in Fifth Avenue. Here are reproduced a few of the scenes on the Avenue of the Allies that forced this American impressionist to put his brush to work. They are taken from an exhibition of flag paintings at the Durand-Ruel Gallery.

Perspectives

By Ralph Block

Biography in the Form of Fiction—
Music and the Soul of Russia

tion. All of these men and women of Mr. Strachey's wanted something finer than what they knew, tried hard to find it, often became confused by lesser aims and died still hunting. Some people have been shocked by this kind of portraiture, which is indiscriminate in its disclosure of good and evil. In sooth, they ought to be grateful for a revelation of the kind of heroism and labor that does not need hypocrisy to maintain or defend it.

The most successful tale in the book is the story of Cardinal Manning. All the hypocrisy and determination by which men of the Victorian age aimed to cover the endless campaigns toward their personal ends is here unveiled with a subtle and penetrating hand. This is more nearly a novel than any other in the book, because behind the great figure of the ambitious man who rose so deviously to great public power in England are the jostled figures of Newman, the piteous but noble Newman of the Apologia, and Gladstone, militant and powerful and unbending. The Oxford Movement, only a name now, but once a thrill for intelligent England, passes in a vague procession, with John Keble and Hurrell Froude in the lead and Bentham and Mills in shadow in the offing.

Cardinal Manning was a man with a suppressed desire that sometimes was able even to deceive the soul so deeply concerned with its own eternal welfare. He wanted persons of distinction and power, and through all the ecclesiastical exigencies of

his passage from the Church of England to Rome he managed to step toward it more and more, managed by intricate ways to put distance between himself and other ambitions panting behind, and all but succeeded in frustrating the sincere and naive Newman and keeping from him the honor that a richly-served Church at last was awakened to bestow. A man who was moved by many visions and called by many spiritual beckonings, possessed of great energies, Manning comes out finally in this picture which Mr. Strachey draws:

"The spare and stately form, the head massive, emaciated, terrible, with the great nose, the glittering eyes, and the mouth drawn back and compressed into the grim rigidity of age, self-mortification and authority."

By this same method Florence Nightingale is revealed as another frustrated spirit of the time, whose desire was greater than the time would allow, a woman full of terrible angers at the incapacity and stupidity of the people about her, moved by great passions for a better world, and turned at last, after so many years of vigor, into a senile old woman. With his own kind of irony, this novelist, who makes use of ac-

quity, describes the scene when the Order of Merit was brought to her by royal command.

"Sir Douglas Dawson, after a short speech, stepped forward and handed the insignia of the order to Miss Nightingale. Propped up by pillows, she dimly recognized that some compliment was being paid her. 'Too kind—too kind,' she murmured; and she was not ironical."

Dr. Arnold and Chinese Gordon are the other two figures in the book; General Gordon is of the two most completely set forth. A close and specific description of this adventurous and mad life is lacking. The perspective is in further distance than the description of Cardinal Manning, where letters lent a closer air of reality. For all that, it is a powerful and well-told story, with tragedy lurking in the wings. Here again the great figures of the day, Gladstone and the Queen and Sir Evelyn Bar-

ing and Mr. Stead, parade behind the courageous Gordon.

Fiction manages to make up a certain rhythm, a strophic and antistrophic movement in its tragic narrative. This story needs no invention to obtain it; Mr. Strachey has amply drawn forth the rhythm contained in the history of this man who began by suppressing a great uprising in China, and who came to his end, after obdurate courage, with his head fixed, by order of the Mahdi, in the branches of a tree on the public highway in Khartoum.

They really are never very far removed from the prize ring. Whether they are to be found at the concert or the theatre or in the picture galleries, they can be spotted by the distinctive air they bear of having come to watch an antagonism. Somewhere and somehow they have missed the facts that the arts are chiefly distillations of the human spirit. There is something combative about them, some yearning for opposition and hostility. They are eager to see how well the protagonist will

conquer his medium; it is a fight to the death every time.

All this has done a tremendous damage to innovations in the arts. An artist has desires and dreams first; he finds a way afterward to make them articulate in an appropriate form. But the audience that makes a profession of being an audience—which includes most critics and dilettantes—would have it the other way about. What preoccupies them is scarcely ever the quality of imagination involved. It is the jargon of manners and methods out of which they develop a great sacerdotal mystery.

The great public is at once repulsed and fascinated by all this; but it is scarcely ever led to understand. A new venture in expression—urged in these days by the constant variation in the life that gives birth to expression—finds notoriety by the classification of its manner, instead of fame by the quality of what it says.

Doubtless the audience for Serge Prokofiev at Aeolian Hall Wednesday was composed of all these elements. But the professional parts of it could pursue their wonted strain only by completely ignoring the human quality of this so-called revolutionary piano playing. Here was no perversion of the instrument, no greedy texture of the scales to extract rare sound. To the amateur appeared nothing but a tall and somewhat diffident looking young man, the kind of Russian who looks like a fiddler, who sat bent at the piano to play some pieces that were difficult and some

of them beautiful and all of them interesting.

This was the man whose "Scythian Suite" was said to have driven Glazunov madly from the concert hall, but the only fever he seemed to parade for his New York audience was the universal fever of the artist who presses on to capture the ideal vision of which he always falls short. It was inescapably Russian, the music that he played, Russian in the sense that it expressed movingly and sweetly the underground meditations of a people whose genius is contemplative and yet whose situation in time and history demands action.

There could be sensed out of the tide of sound, moving slowly in strange channels of rhythm, or rising to lash itself against the atmospheres about, an understanding of the great tide of human hope and desire from which it came and to which it seemed to try to give a voice. The Russian is a child who has never yet come to terms with the destiny the circumstance of an exacting world presses on him. He is a stranger in the West; he would sit most comfortably in a barbers and at city gates, dreaming of a withheld perfection. But the West holds no time for dreaming. And in all his art he gives a free voice to his desire for what is ultimate and profoundly desirable. Bolshevism is the side of him which has been obsessed by the danger of failure. His art is that part of his soul where in remote shades he allows himself to hope.